



ST. CHARLES PARISH

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

P. O. BOX 169 • NEW SARPY, LOUISIANA 70078

(985) 764-7944 • FAX (985) 764-7943 • TDD# (985) 783-5000

Website: www.stcharlesparish-la.gov

V.J. ST. PIERRE, JR.
PARISH PRESIDENT

JOAN T. DIAZ, MPA
DIRECTOR

TO: V. J. St. Pierre, Parish President

FROM: Joan Diaz, Director of Community Services

SUBJECT: 2012 Annual Report

Executive Summary

The Department of Community Services serves as the safety net for individuals and struggling families throughout St. Charles Parish by providing a comprehensive array of services. In collaboration with our community partners we provide programs that are responsive to the needs of low income families; families and individuals in crisis; and youth at risk in targeted communities through a comprehensive service delivery system that protects the dignity and potential of every person.

The department develops and implements programs and services that allow us to provide supportive services to residents in crisis, alleviate pain and suffering, improve the quality of life of low income families, build self-sufficiency, and break the cycle of poverty.

To accomplish these goals, the department has implemented the following initiatives during the 2012 fiscal year:

Intake Process

Through a **comprehensive centralized intake and assessment process** the department identifies the needs of clients, tracks vital service data, and determines gaps in resources available to assist clients. Data collected through the intake process helps to link clients with the resources needed and establish priorities for future planning. **Intake data from January – December, 2012 indicated that 1,150 citizens from St. Charles Parish applied for some type of assistance through the main office.** This included requests for assistance with utilities; rent or mortgage; food and emergency shelter; assistance with prescriptions and requests for help locating a resource/referral for other types of emergency assistance in the broader social service community. Eighty percent or 922 clients applying for support requested some type of

assistance from our department in the past; Two hundred twenty eight (228) or twenty percent of the clients who came to us in 2012 indicated that this was their first time applying for help.

Community Partnerships

In an effort to expand our capacity to respond to the needs of clients, the department began cultivating partnerships with other community based organizations in order to develop a coordinated service delivery system. This includes the development or **expansion of partnerships** with local, state and national nonprofit and public service organizations to include the following:

- Volunteers of America to build ramps for elderly and disabled residents
- Client referrals to other programs and services included the, Alpha Daughters of Zion, St. Charles Borromeo St. Vincent DePaul Society; Catholic Charities Money Matters Program; and St. Charles Parish Social Concerns.
- A partnership with Kingsley House to provide crisis counseling to clients served through the department's Life skills program.
- Working with Second Harvest to provide snacks to youth in the St. Rose Community Center after school program.
- Collaboration with the St. Charles Parish Library to provide special on site programs for youth participating in the St. Rose Center after school program.
- The establishment of a Second Harvest Food Bank at the Department of Community Services main site.
- A partnership with the State of Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services to serve as a silver level partner site to assist clients with applying for state programs.
- Partnership with COX cable to provide senior discounts on cable services.
- A joint project with Catholic Heart Camp to provide volunteer labor for health and safety/home repair projects.

Expanding Programs for Youth at Risk

In an effort to provide a safe haven and supportive services to residents of the Preston Hollow subdivision and surrounding area, the department launched a variety of informal educational activities at the St. Rose Community Center. Major programs and services offered at the center during 2012 included:

- **After school activity center program** midweek during the school year in order to provide a safe haven for youth in the community from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00p.m.. Activities include homework help, snacks, and specialized programs in partnership with community organizations, supervised free play and structured activities.
- The department developed a **monthly calendar of activities** appealing to a variety of clients that included:
 - Computer skills classes and access to the computer lab
 - **GED Prep** course to assist high school drop outs with the basic skills to prepare them to enter into a GED program
 - A community garden with consultation from the LSU cooperative extension agent.
 - Specialized program in partnership with the local library
 - Seasonal programs for youth
 - Xbox 360 tournaments utilizing sports, dance and fitness programs.

- A **Summer Enrichment Program** for youth in the St. Rose area that included daily structured activities and field trips to the zoo, Louisiana Nature Center, the New Orleans Museum of Art and Bayou Segnette State Park wave pool.
- In 2012 the department launched a **pilot Summer Enrichment Program** in conjunction with the Summer Food Program as an outreach effort to youth in the **Killona** area.

Emergency Assistance

As a safety net for struggling families, the department provides emergency assistance with utility bills, rent/mortgage, food and medicine and emergency shelter to qualified low income families and elderly residents.

- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Share the Warmth emergency program (ATMOS) funds used to assist with utility bills.
- Provided temporary assistance during an emergency to fire victims, clients needing medicine, recently unemployed and assistance with temporary family crisis.
- Food assistance through the department food bank and Thanksgiving baskets.

Client Education

In an effort to help clients build self sufficiency, the department implemented a nationally recognized evidence based life skills program called **Tackling the Tough Skills**. The program targeted unemployed clients to participate in group sessions that are focused on assisting them with the development of life management and job readiness skills. In addition, we worked in partnership with the local Workforce Investment program to provide onsite workshops for their clients. Eighteen clients attended life skills training, three completing the curriculum. Ten clients took advantage of the onsite, one on one crisis counseling provided by a licensed counselor from Kingsley House.

H.O.M.E Program

HUD program is designed to assist low income and elderly homeowners with home repairs. Applicants must be qualified under HUD guidelines. The department worked through a consortium with Jefferson Parish to improve the approval process in order to expedite applications for home repairs under this funding stream.

Emergency Home Repair Program

Program provides support for emergency home repairs for elderly, low income and single head of household. Repairs are limited to \$5,000. The department worked to supplement this program through the use of volunteers and to secure future matching funds from private partners.

Information Management

The department transitioned our client record keeping system to the national, web based CAP60 program. The program is designed to track data required for quarterly and annual CSBG reports and allows the department to manage client data for all programs and services provided to residents of St. Charles Parish.

2012 Major Accomplishments

During 2012, the Department of Community Services continued to provide innovative programs and assistance that compassionately served low-income, elderly, handicapped, and other disadvantaged residents of St. Charles Parish. With the funding sources of Community Services Block Grant, Department of Education, Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program, Department of the Treasury, Atmos Energy, Louisiana Association of Community Action Partnership, Inc., Louisiana Housing Finance Agency, HUD and St. Charles Parish Council, the department's 2012 budget was a total one million, four hundred ninety two thousand, two hundred ten dollars (1,492,210.00). These funds were used to provide the following services; Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Emergency Assistance Program (EAP), Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), H.O.M.E. Program (HP), Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), Medicaid Program (MP), Health & Safety Rehabilitation (HSR), St. Rose Community Center, and Information & Referral Services (I&R). A brief description and summary of the services provided for each program is shown below.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP): During 2012, 2,000 low-income residents were directly impacted with energy assistance. DCS processed nine hundred eleven (911) **applications** and disbursed LIHEAP grant funds to provide utility assistance totaling **\$319,349.62**. These payments were made directly to the utility company as a credit to the client's account.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP): Parish funds were leveraged to assist residents experiencing an emergency financial crisis. **Sixty (80) clients were assisted through emergency funds.** The breakdown is as follows: 12 applicants receive assistance with their electric bill, 2 client received assistance with their gas bill, and 42 clients received help with their water bill, 5 prescription application, 3 grocery applications and 2 rent applications, 14 shelter applications, and 5 fire victims received food and clothing assistance. A total of eight thousand two hundred twenty dollars (**\$ 8,220.85**) was expended for direct emergency assistance utilizing the following funding sources: CSBG funds (24 clients served); Medicine assistance (2 clients); Rent or mortgage assistance (5 clients); Water assistance (17 clients); Emergency Food and shelter program (11 clients).

In addition, **269 clients were given food** from the onsite Second Harvest Food Bank and 26 clients received food from the department food pantry

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP): The Summer Food Service Program for 2012 was held from June 6 thru July 14, 2012. Reimbursements for seven thousand nine hundred twenty eight (**7,928**) **meals** were received from the state. Meals were served to handicapped children over 18 enrolled in an accredited state program as well as all children under the age of 18 residing in the parish. Lunch was served at two (2) sites on the west bank and one (1) site on the east bank. Twenty one thousand three hundred eighty four dollars and fifty two cents (**\$21,384.52**) was reimbursed to the St. Charles Parish School Board for bus and facility rentals, and utilities.

H.O.M.E. PROGRAM (HP)

The HUD HOME program is implemented by the Department of Community Services through a cooperative effort with Jefferson Parish Community Development. The program allows for up to \$40,000 in home renovations to qualified homeowners in St. Charles Parish. **Four (4) projects were completed in 2012** with an additional seven (7) houses qualifying for this program. **A total of \$172,012** was drawn down from available HUD grant funds for these projects.

REPAIRS ON WHEELS (ROW): Thanks to the United Way Agency of St Charles a \$25,000 grant was awarded to the Volunteers of America of Greater New Orleans to build handicap ramps for citizens of St. Charles Parish. Volunteers of America of Greater New Orleans worked in partnership with the department to identify disabled residents for the Repairs on Wheels program. **Nine (9) handicap ramps were built under this program in 2012.**

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM (H&SP): **Forty four (44) households were assisted through the Health and Safety program – a significant increase over previous years.** Assistance included distribution of fans, air conditioners, heaters, trailer repairs, one roof and the replacement of one central unit. A grant was received from United Way of St. Charles to supplement the funding for this program. In addition, several projects were completed utilizing volunteers from Catholic Heart Camp that provided a week of service in June. **A total of \$29,124.12 was expended** for direct assistance through this program.

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (WAP): **Nine (9) homes were weatherized** through our department Weatherization program during 2012. Project Recovery ARRA Weatherization Program funds were used to fund these projects. Energy saving materials such as blow-in cellulose insulation, weather-stripping, caulking, door sweeps, ridge vents, window and door insulation materials, as well as services to the a/c units and hot water heaters were provided. Total expenditures for weatherization services were **\$58,668**. The weatherization program ended in March of 2012.

ST. ROSE COMMUNITY CENTER: Intake data indicated that **1,314 individuals signed into the center before 2:30 p.m. and 1,282 youth signed in to participate in after school activities. A total of 3,091 snacks were distributed to youth** participating in various programs throughout 2012. Educational, recreational, and community-oriented services were provided through the center throughout the year. Major programs and projects included Black History activities, literacy and gardening, movie day, Summer Food Services Program, neighborhood beautification projects. Structured afterschool activities were provided Tuesday through Thursday utilizing a drop in center model with extended hours on those days. Weekly and seasonal services included homework help, art, and reading, computer classes for seniors, and snacks for youth participating in all programs. **An average of 30 youth per day participated in the Summer Enrichment program.**

THANKSGIVING BASKETS: Community partners and parish employees donated to our annual Thanksgiving basket drive. Donations were made in the form of checks, cash, gift cards, and turkeys. In addition to our community partners, staff and volunteers, corporate partners included Zachery Corp., Ameriprise Financial; Faulk Renew Prager and Entergy Waterford.

Dow Chemical gave an additional 25 baskets for distribution. A total of one hundred fifty **(163) baskets were distributed** to residents of St. Charles Parish.

TOY GIVE AWAY: A toy give away was coordinated by the department in partnership with individual sponsors and corporate groups Over **500 toys** were distributed to youth from needy families. The local Business 2 Business group sponsored all youth participating in the St. Rose Center After School program and purchased 2 gifts from the “wish list” for each child.

MATTRESS DONATION: The department received a donation of **42 mattresses** from Cornerstone Chemical Company. The mattresses were distributed to families with children from low income areas.

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES (I&R): Brokering and linking clients to other services is a great majority of the case management service offered in the department. Therefore, when the applicant or client was either ineligible for any of the services and /or where additional assistance was needed, referrals were made. DCS provided fifty one **(51) referrals**. Referrals were made to other social service agencies within and outside of the parish, including: Social Concerns, Office of Family Services, St. Charles Health Unit, Red Cross, Council on Aging, Social Security, Veterans Administration as well as churches, and other various parish offices.

HURRICANE ISAAC: The department provided support to families in the aftermath of Hurricane Isaac through the distribution of emergency food and water, assistance with FEMA and DSNAP applications; and emergency services. **Nine (9)** clients received emergency shelter; **three clients (3)** assistance with medicine; **Thirteen (13)** resource referrals; **Fifty (50) bags of ice and cases of water distributed;** and **five hundred fourteen (514) families** received emergency food and water in the days immediately following the storm. In addition, the department assisted **seventy one (71)** clients with **online DSNAP** applications and **five (5) FEMA** applications.